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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

December 12, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Following recent discussions, an examination of the NRO has been undertaken, to seek ways of insuring the best use of the talents and resources of both DOD and CIA. At a meeting on 7 November 1963, General Carter, Dr. Wheelon, and Mr. Bross of the CIA reviewed with me and with Mr. Kiefer, Deputy DNRO, the organizations, responsibilities, and technical capabilities of (1) the NRO Staff, (2) the NRO Program A under Major General Robert Greer, SAFSP and Deputy Commander, AF Space Systems Division, (3) the NRO Program B under Jack Ledford, Colonel, USAF, now on duty with the CIA under the Deputy Director for Science and Technology (DDSand T), and (4) the organization of the DDS and T,CIA.

As this review showed, to a considerable degree at present, the offices of the NRO are staffed by mixed groups. Participation by Air Force personnel in Program B is extensive. In the key positions, the NRO Staff has 21 military officers assigned. Of this number, 18 are Air Force, of whom four have had previous assignment with CIA, and two come from the Navy and one from the Army. In addition, there are three CIA senior career employees and one career employee from NSA. Program A has two CIA career employees, one Navy and one Army officer, out of a total direct staff of 16. Approximately 130 SSD and Aerospace Corporation technical personnel provide full and part time support to the Director of Program A.

At the meeting of 7 November, I outlined several management functions in which I felt the NRO needed strengthening and suggested some in which the contributions of qualified personnel with substantial previous experience in the CIA would be particularly useful. Specific recommendations in this regard

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are set forth in later paragraphs. I also stated at the meeting that I was not willing to make arbitrary enlargements of, or substitutions in, the NRO management structure. Changes in staffing will be instituted as in my judgment the needs of NRO dictate, and as rotation of personnel requires.

I would like to consider immediately nominations from the CIA for candidates for the following three positions.

On the NRO Staff:

1. One individual highly qualified in aircraft operational matters. He would function as Staff Aircraft Operations Officer, maintaining cognizance of all overflight operations using present aircraft, and of the status of these aircraft and their systems.

2. One individual well qualified in image sensors and sensor systems. He would function as a Staff Engineer on sensor problems relating to reconnaissance vehicles.

On the Staff of the Director, Program A:

3. One individual well qualified in research and development in a wide variety of technical fields. He would function as a Staff Development Engineer directing study and development contracts related to advanced systems for satellite reconnaissance.

I suggest that individuals nominated for these positions hold grades in the GS-13 to GS-14 range. I would like if possible to consider principle and alternate nominations for each post, with a sufficient statement of background, experience, and education of each individual that effective comparisons can be made with other candidates. As I have already stated, it is my feeling in connection with these assignments that substantial previous experience with the CIA, in appropriately related activities, is a valuable qualification.

In other actions, I have proposed changes in the operating management of the CORONA project which would transfer responsibility for certain CIA contracts to a CIA contracting officer

on the staff of the Director, Program A. I believe that the workload is such that this will require assigning another CIA contracting officer to Program A. If so, this is a fourth post which should be filled as soon as possible.

The two positions on the NRO Staff will be physically located in the Pentagon. The assignments with the Staff of the Director, Program A, will be on the West Coast.

I do not consider that the assignments proposed are for purposes of liaison. Personnel selected for the posts recommended above are to be assigned on the strength of the constructive contributions they can make to the NRP. They will be expected, as in the case of all NRO personnel, regardless of parent organization, to serve under the direct supervision of the NRO office to which they are assigned. NRO supervisors will be responsible for performance of the personnel assigned to them.

I do not believe that the assignments suggested here are the last in which the experience and background of CIA employees will prove valuable. Other actions now in process with respect to CORONA management, and in connection with Staff functions in support of advanced planning, may bring up further specific requests for nominations from the CIA. As personnel are rotated after their normal tours of duty, I shall continue to examine all sources for the best qualified replacements.

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Director
National Reconnaissance Office

cc: Deputy Secretary of Defense

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3-pg memo from Dr. McMillan re NRO

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